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Rejuvenating the Soviet Party Apparatus

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An Intelligence Assessment

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by the
Office of Soviet Analysis, with contributions from

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welcome and may be directed to the Chief,
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**Rejuvenating the Soviet
Party Apparatus**

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Key Judgments*Information available
as of 18 February 1986
was used in this report.*

Mikhail Gorbachev is counting on a revolution in leadership style—not systemic reform—to accomplish his priority objectives, accelerating economic growth and repairing a frayed social fabric. In the classical Soviet manner, he has assigned to the party apparatus the task of seeing to it that his program is successfully implemented.

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To this end Gorbachev has instituted a wide-ranging purge of the apparatus. He has moved quickly to bring the central party apparatus under his control—placing an ally, Yegor Ligachev, as second-in-command of the Secretariat, adding three of his own choices as junior secretaries, purging political rival Grigoriy Romanov from its ranks, and naming nine new heads of key Central Committee departments.

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He also has made a good start in rejuvenating the regional leadership, sacking three republic first secretaries and roughly a third of the provincial leadership—the most drastic overhaul of the leadership since Khrushchev's time.

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Gorbachev's purge is designed to produce a cadre of officials with the political loyalties, technical competence, and leadership skills necessary to implement his program. He has installed new procedures for selecting and promoting party officials, moreover, that are evidently designed to ensure that future party leaders meet these requirements:

- He is reducing the average age of party leaders in an effort to get a better mix of experience and new blood.
- He is cross-posting regional leaders to block the development of "localist" sentiments and to ensure that they remain wedded to central policies.
- He has revived a practice used by both Stalin and Khrushchev, replacing many local leaders with officials who have spent a stint in the central party apparatus as "inspectors."

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The evidence is too sparse to assess the temperament and policy inclination of the new party leaders, but at a minimum they will not be beholden to the entrenched bureaucracies and traditional procedures they have been assigned to oversee. At least for now, they will be unable to use these institutions as entrenched power bases to challenge the Moscow leadership. They are likely to be more open to innovative solutions to problems and

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more enthusiastic implementers of new policies. Gorbachev has made it clear that they will be held more strictly accountable for their performance than their predecessors.

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But even these new leaders will be hard pressed to achieve the turnaround in solving the country's political and economic problems that Gorbachev is hoping for:

- They face the same formidable problems and obstacles as their predecessors and, barring more radical reforms than we have seen to date, they will have to work within the same institutional constraints.
- While it has been relatively easy for Gorbachev to remove ineffective veterans, most of whom were at retirement age, the real test of his revolution will be his willingness and ability to sack his own appointees should they founder.

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Although he has presided over the greatest change in the party apparatus since Khrushchev, much remains to be done before Gorbachev will have turned it into a reliable tool for implementing his policies:

- He needs to beef up the Secretariat, name a new secretary to oversee economic matters, and appoint allies to take over important portfolios that are still in the hands of Brezhnev-era holdovers. He will also want to name additional senior secretaries with full Politburo status to dilute Ligachev's political strength.
- The recent reelections of Ukrainian party chief Vladimir Shcherbitskiy and Kazakh party chief Dinmukhamed Kunayev signal to Soviet officials that there are limits to Gorbachev's power to push his purge of the regional apparatus.

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The party congress will provide an important test of the residual strength of resistance to Gorbachev's personnel and policy agenda within the party apparatus. There are indications that Gorbachev may be planning initiatives to give a new boost to his efforts to rejuvenate the party leadership:

- He is likely to seek the removal of more veteran party secretaries—possibly Boris Ponomarev and Mikhail Zimyanin—and their replacement by Vadim Zagladin, Konstantin Katushev, or Aleksandr Yakovlev. A successful last-minute move against Shcherbitskiy or Kunayev would be a particularly brazen and ruthless move.

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- [] Gorbachev plans to launch a direct assault on the corruption and mistakes of the Brezhnev years, giving the General Secretary a club to further discredit those—such as Shcherbitskiy and Kunayev—associated with Brezhnev's regime. 25X1
- He may try to change the draft party statute to insert provisions limiting the tenure in office of party officials—provisions that he reportedly pushed for but failed to achieve in the initial draft. These provisions would provide Gorbachev a means to institutionalize turnover and ensure the continued vitality of the apparatus.
- Gorbachev now appears likely to achieve almost a 50-percent turnover of the Central Committee at the upcoming Congress—the greatest change in its composition since the 22nd Congress in 1961. [] 25X1

At a minimum Gorbachev needs to advance some of his allies into the leadership at the Congress in order to avoid a political setback. An endorsement of provisions limiting party officials' tenure, while not as essential to Gorbachev, would send a strong signal to the bureaucracy that the pace of change will not flag in the months ahead. Gorbachev can probably postpone efforts to remove Kunayev or Shcherbitskiy, but a successful move against either would indicate Gorbachev's resolve to act now against the last vestiges of the old guard. [] 25X1

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Rejuvenating the Soviet Party Apparatus

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The Brezhnev Legacy

When Leonid Brezhnev seized the position of General Secretary from Nikita Khrushchev in 1964, the party apparatus gained respite from the job insecurity that Khrushchev had purposefully manipulated in order to ensure that it remained responsive to his directives.

Under Brezhnev the criteria for measuring party leaders' performance became lax and merit came to play a minor role in the selection and promotion of party leaders. Few officials were removed from their positions because of incompetence. Fertile soil was created for the growth of nepotism and abuse of position for personal gain. By the time Brezhnev finally departed the scene, the effectiveness of the apparatus in implementing central social and economic policies had been badly degraded.

Gorbachev Breaks With the Past

Mikhail Gorbachev, renewing a process begun by his mentor Yuriy Andropov, has made a sharp break with Brezhnev's personnel policies. He has quickly accelerated the pace of turnover among party officials—from the Secretariat to the local leadership.

Gorbachev's attempt to step up the pace of change is designed to accomplish simultaneously his political and policy objectives. Promotion of officials who will be beholden to Gorbachev and removal of his opponents are the most direct way to consolidate power. But Gorbachev also seems driven by the need to install a cadre of vigorous, innovative, and technically competent officials whom he can count on to carry out his program for rejuvenating the Soviet system. He has said that those not up to the challenge will have to "get out of the way," and the scope of personnel changes he has forced through to date in the party's

The Secretariat's Crucial Role

Mastery of the CPSU Secretariat has been since Stalin's time the key to Soviet leaders' success in consolidating power and successfully pursuing policy. Gorbachev's control over this apparatus gives him a bureaucratic edge over his colleagues on the Politburo:

- *The Secretariat provides the General Secretary great political leverage through the control that it exercises over the selection and placement of personnel in all key party and government posts.*
- *Through the Secretariat the General Secretary controls the organization of the Politburo's agenda—a key factor in gaining and keeping the policy-making initiative.*
- *Mastery of the Secretariat also gives the General Secretary the power to oversee the execution of policy by governmental and other institutions through the Central Committee departments.*

Gorbachev recognizes the importance of the Secretariat as his base of political operations. He indicated at the Supreme Soviet session last July that he had declined the Presidency in order to concentrate his energies on the "central party organs."

Secretariat, the Central Committee departments, and the regional party leadership shows that he means business.

Changes in the Secretariat

Gorbachev was faced with the immediate task last March of bringing the CPSU Secretariat under his control (see inset). Two of his close political associates,

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Yegor Ligachev and Nikolay Ryzhkov, held key positions on the Secretariat that he inherited from Konstantin Chernenko, overseeing personnel appointments and the economy. But Gorbachev was forced to deal with five holdovers from the Brezhnev era responsible for heavy industry, light industry and consumer goods, foreign affairs and the media, and one potentially dangerous competitor—Politburo member Grigoriy Romanov, whose responsibilities included supervision of the military, the KGB, and the defense industries. [redacted]

Since his election, Gorbachev has made a good start in reshaping the body (see table 1). While four Brezhnev holdovers remain, he has:

- Installed Yegor Ligachev in the key “second secretary” slot, where he not only supervises his own special portfolios—personnel policy and ideology—but also oversees the work of the other members of the Secretariat.
- Purged Romanov, replacing him with Lev Zaykov, the former first secretary in Leningrad. Zaykov’s recent activities indicate that his portfolio may be expanding into other areas of heavy industry.
- Placed two other colleagues in important economic oversight positions: former Sverdlovsk party chief Boris Yel’tsin—a contemporary of Premier Ryzhkov, who graduated from the same engineering school—was made secretary in charge of the construction industry.¹ Former RSFSR Agriculture Minister and Gorbachev coworker Viktor Nikonov was made agriculture secretary.
- Removed Konstantin Rusakov, veteran secretary in charge of relations with ruling Communist parties. [redacted]

The Central Committee Departments

Yuriy Andropov made a strong start at rejuvenating the leadership of the 23 Central Committee departments charged with overseeing the implementation of

¹ With his recent election as chief of the Moscow city party organization, Yel’tsin has given up this portfolio and his position on the Secretariat. [redacted]

Table 1
Gorbachev’s Secretariat

	Age	Portfolio	Date of Appointment
Mikhail Gorbachev	54	General Secretary	11 March 1985
Yegor Ligachev	64	Personnel, ideology	23 April 1984
Vladimir Dolgikh	61	Heavy industries	24 May 1982
Boris Ponomarev	71	Relations with nonruling Communist parties	19 May 1972
Ivan Kapitonov	69	Light industry, consumer goods	1965
Viktor Nikonov	56	Agriculture	23 April 1985
Lev Zaykov	62	Security organs, defense industry	5 July 1976
Mikhail Zimyanin	70	Propaganda, ideology	5 March 1976

the party’s policy on a day-to-day basis. He retired eight elderly chiefs, replacing them with men whose average age was 57. After a period of stagnation under Chernenko, Gorbachev has once again stepped up the pace of change (see table 2). He has named nine new department heads since his election:

- Taking advantage of Ligachev’s assumption of greater responsibilities, he put former Krasnodar party chief and protege Georgiy Razumovskiy in charge of the Organizational and Party Work Department—the party’s powerful “personnel department,” which oversees the selection and promotion of candidates to fill leading party posts.
- First, Boris Yel’tsin from Ryzhkov’s provincial base of Sverdlovsk and, subsequently, Ligachev protege Aleksandr Mel’nikov from Tomsk were brought in to head the Construction Department, a sector to which Gorbachev has paid particular attention.

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Table 2
Leadership of the
Central Committee Departments

	Appointee	Date of Appointment		Appointee	Date of Appointment
Andropov's changes					
Administration of Affairs	Nikolay Kruchina (58)	December 1983	Light Industries and Consumer Goods Department	Leonid Bobykin ^a	January 1986
Cadres Abroad Department	Stepan Chervonenko (70)	January 1983	Machine Building Department	Arkadiy Vol'skiy ^a	May 1985
Chemical Industry Department	Veniamin Afonin ^a	February 1983	Organizational Party Work Department	Georgiy Razumovskiy (50)	June 1985
General Department	Klavdiy Bogolyubov (76)	July 1983	Trade and Domestic Services Department	Nikolay Stashenkov ^a	July 1985
Economics Department	Nikolay Ryzhkov (56)	November 1982	Propaganda Department	Aleksandr Yakovlev (62)	July 1985
Organizational Party Work Department	Yegor Ligachev (65)	April 1983	Holdover department heads		
Propaganda Department	Boris Stukalin (62)	December 1982	Administrative Organs Department	Nikolay Savinkin (73)	February 1968
Science and Educational Institutions Department	Vadim Medvedev (66)	August 1983	Agricultural Machine Building Department	Ivan Sakhnyuk (63)	June 1980
Chernenko's change			Agricultural and Food Industry Department	Vladimir Karlov (71)	May 1976
Heavy Industries Department	Ivan Yastrebov (75)	March 1984	Culture Department	Vasiliy Shauro (73)	November 1965
Gorbachev's changes			International Department	Boris Ponomarev (82)	1955
Construction Department	Boris Yel'tsin (55)	April 1985	International Information Department	Leonid Zamyatin (63)	March 1978
Defense Industry Department	Oleg Belyakov ^a	August 1985	Transport and Communications Department	Kirill Simonov (68)	June 1962
Economics Department ^b	Boris Gostev (59)	October 1985			
General Department	Anatoliy Lukyanov (55)	December 1985			

^a Age unavailable.

^b Gostev has since been promoted to Minister of Finance, leaving the department vacant again.

Note: Konstantin Rusakov's recent removal leaves the liaison with Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries (Bloc) Department vacant.

- He has also replaced several elderly chiefs of departments overseeing other specific economic sectors.

On the foreign policy side, Gorbachev installed an apparent protege, Aleksandr Yakovlev, as head of the key Propaganda Department, sending the incumbent off to be ambassador to Hungary. Yakovlev, who

previously headed the important World Economics and International Relations Institute, has a reputation for being tough minded on East-West relations, but also is said to be capable, like Gorbachev, of being flexible in his approach to foreign policy where it suits Soviet interests.

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The Regional Leaders

The General Secretary's ability to rule the country effectively rests on the competence and loyalty of the approximately 170 regional leaders who serve as party chiefs in the republics and major provinces. As implementers of central policy, they can act as enthusiastic enforcers or as effective roadblocks to the execution of the leader's will in the regions. Accounting for more than 40 percent of the Central Committee, they represent an important constituency whose loyalty and support are essential for implementing policy and maintaining political control. [redacted]

Brezhnev was very solicitous of this group during most of his tenure, slowing the rate of turnover among them to a fraction of that which had prevailed during the turbulent Khrushchev times when the average tenure in office was only three years. Andropov made a good start in revitalizing the regional leadership before he died in February 1984, filling vacancies in three of 12 republics—Belorussia, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan—and replacing 34 of the 155 leaders in the provinces (the country's major territorial divisions below the republic level). Chernenko, however, markedly slowed the pace of change among regional leaders, replacing only 13 of them. [redacted]

Gorbachev came to power stressing the need to get the economy moving again. Regional leaders were immediately put on notice that heavy demands would be put on them, and that changes in their ranks were in the offing if they did not stand up to the test. In a show of strength, Gorbachev has made good on his threat to force recalcitrant leaders out of their positions:

- Four more of the 14 republic first secretaries have been replaced. Eduard Shevardnadze departed his post as head of the Georgian Republic's party organization to become Foreign Minister. The Central Asian republics have been singled out by Gorbachev for especially harsh treatment, with first secretaries being unceremoniously purged from their positions in Kirgiziya, Tadzhikistan, and Turkmenistan (see table 3).
- More than 50 of the 155 provincial party chiefs have been replaced. Some of these, like Leningrad leader Zaykov, were advanced to higher posts. The

Table 3
Changes of Leadership in the Republics

	Date	New Leader	Replaced
Georgian SSR	July 1985	Dzhumbar Patiashvili (46)	Eduard Shevardnadze (57)
Kirghiz SSR	November 1985	Absamat Masaliyev (52)	Turdakun Usubaliyev (66)
Tadzhik SSR	December 1985	Kakhar Makhkamov ^a	Rakhman Nabiyev (55)
Turkmen-istan	December 1985	Saparmurad Niyazov ^a	Mukhamednazar Gapurov (63)

^a Age unavailable.

[redacted]

majority of them, Brezhnev holdovers of retirement age who had been in their positions for years, were pensioned off. [redacted]

Gorbachev's Strategy

Gorbachev is counting on a revolution in leadership style—not systemic reform—to accomplish his priority objectives of accelerating economic growth and repairing a frayed social fabric. In the classical Soviet manner, he has assigned to the party apparatus the task of ensuring that his program is successfully implemented. Regional party leaders installed under Gorbachev have made clear that the apparatus they supervise will be expected to crack the whip over the government bureaucracy and hold economic officials to exacting performance standards (see inset). [redacted]

Gorbachev appears to be relying on a fundamental change in procedures for selecting and promoting party leaders to ensure that his new cadre will have the political commitment, technical competence, and

Republic Leaders on the Party's Economic Role

At republic-level party congresses in January and February, new leaders installed under Gorbachev have called for party organizations to keep a tight rein on the economic bureaucracy:

- *New Turkmen Republic party leader Saparmurad Niyazov criticized the republic's Central Committee departments for failing to ensure that economic decisions were actually executed and demanded an "end to such incompetent practices."*
- *Kirgiz first secretary Absamat Masaliyev complained that the republic's party organization got "carried away" by lengthy conferences—adopting hundreds of decisions on economic matters and then failing to make sure they were fulfilled. He called upon the Central Committee, its bureaus, and secretaries to exercise "day-to-day" leadership of economic development.*
- *Tadzhik first secretary Kakhar Makhamov criticized the republic's agriculture secretary and several other party leaders by name for failure to ensure that decisions adopted by the leadership were implemented in their respective sectors.*

management skills necessary to carry out his program. He is using the process to consolidate his political power, but he is emphasizing selection criteria that appear calculated in the first instance to build an apparatus with the leadership skills necessary to get the job done. In many cases, he has passed up the opportunity to advance candidates with clear personal ties to himself. Several party officials have alluded to the equivalent of a five-year plan for cadre renewal that was apparently approved by the March 1985 Central Committee plenum that elected Gorbachev as General Secretary.

The general principles he appears to follow in choosing the new party leadership and the rationale behind them were spelled out most clearly in the

authoritative party journal *Kommunist* last March by the new head of the Central Committee department that oversees personnel appointments, Georgiy Razumovskiy. As described by Razumovskiy, the principles include:

- Reducing the average age of party leaders in an effort to achieve a better mix of experienced managers and new blood.
- Ensuring that party officials possess sufficient technical competence by having them serve a stint in economic management positions.
- Developing procedures to block the development of "localist" sentiments and to ensure that regional party leaders remain wedded to the goals and policies of the center.

Personnel actions since he took over in March make clear Razumovskiy was speaking for the General Secretary. Gorbachev has been transferring leaders laterally more often than promoting them from within their own local party organizations. Reviving a practice used by both Stalin and Khrushchev, Gorbachev has also in many cases been replacing local leaders with officials who have first spent a stint in the central party apparatus, where they work as "inspectors" in the Organizational Party Work Department before being sent back to their home districts. Alumni of this school for regional party leaders have been named to head almost 25 percent of the local first secretary posts vacated since Gorbachev came into office.

According to a Soviet official, this "corp of inspectors" numbers about 100 officials. With their selection personally approved by Ligachev, they are brought in from provincial party organizations for six months of instruction in Soviet domestic and foreign policy and a thorough exposure to the work of the Central Committee. They are closely scrutinized by Ligachev and his aides, and those who pass the test provide a pool of carefully selected talent for advancement to key provincial leadership posts. Ligachev reportedly selects these candidates for promotion, while Gorbachev signs off on the choices.

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Unfinished Business

Against the backdrop of the decade of near paralysis at the top that preceded Gorbachev's reign, the scope of changes he has wrought to date in the staffing of the party apparatus is remarkable. At the same time he has a long way to go before he can be confident that he has a reliable and effective tool for implementing his policy agenda. Given the short time since his election and the need to ensure he is choosing qualified replacements, Gorbachev has only begun to tackle the rejuvenation of the middle and lower levels of the party apparatus. As the continuing political health of some of those he has targeted—such as Shcherbitskiy—would suggest, he still faces entrenched resistance to his personnel strategy. []

The Secretariat

At present, the Secretariat is not adequately staffed to supervise the implementation of domestic policy. With Ryzhkov's promotion to the Premiership, only two secretaries remain with full Politburo status—Gorbachev and Ligachev. In the past as many as five such “senior secretaries” shared the task of supervising personnel, ideology, foreign policy, agriculture, and industry. Moreover, important sectors are still under the control of Brezhnev holdovers:

- With Ryzhkov's transfer to the Council of Ministers, for instance, Gorbachev has apparently had to resort to putting candidate Politburo member and secretary Vladimir Dolgikh temporarily in charge of overall economic management (we do not know whether Gorbachev has run into resistance on choosing a successor, but Dolgikh does not appear to be an ally).
- On the foreign policy side, Gorbachev must still rely on veteran secretary Boris Ponomarev, who heads the International Department in addition to holding a seat in the Secretariat. Although it is unclear whether his views are in conflict with those of the General Secretary, it is not likely that Gorbachev considers him the best executor of his more innovative foreign policy. In addition, a successor must be found for recently retired secretary and Bloc Relations Department chief Konstantin Rusakov.

- Similarly, the cause of making Soviet propaganda and ideology more interesting, plausible, and appealing—an apparent Gorbachev priority—is not likely to be advanced under the tutelage of the aging present ideology and propaganda secretary, Mikhail Zimyanin. []

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Although Ligachev is a political ally of Gorbachev's, his control of personnel appointments gives him the potential to build an independent power base, which he could ultimately use to challenge his mentor. Consequently, Gorbachev will probably soon add at least one more member to the ranks of “senior secretaries” in order to dilute Ligachev's authority. []

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[] Ponomarev, like Rusakov, is on his way out, and that they probably will be replaced by two of the candidates in line for promotion to the Secretariat:

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- The International Department's first deputy head, Vadim Zagladin, who has been Ponomarev's highly visible “right-hand man” for a number of years, appears to be in line for imminent promotion. Deputy Vitaliy Shaposhnikov recently became a second “first deputy” in the department, a move that Embassy contacts claim is a precursor to Zagladin's advance. A specialist in European issues, Zagladin would be a logical successor to Ponomarev, but some accounts suggest he might go elsewhere.
- Propaganda Department Chief Aleksandr Yakovlev, a close adviser to Gorbachev, is also clearly on his way up. Some reports last fall suggested that he would be the one to replace Ponomarev, but Soviet sources now say he is in line to take charge of the ideology portfolio, probably replacing Zimyanin in the process.
- Konstantin Katushev, head of the Bloc Relations Department and Central Committee secretary before running afoul of Brezhnev in 1977, is rumored

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to be in line to resume his old position in Rusakov's stead. Zagladin has also been mentioned as a possible candidate for the position.

- Were Rusakov to be replaced by his conservative first deputy, Oleg Rakhmanin, it would be a clear signal that Gorbachev plans to keep his East European allies on a tight leash.
- Georgiy Arbatov and Oleg Bogomolov, the head of the World Socialist System Institute, also have been rumored to be in line for positions on the Secretariat, but both appear to be long shots at this point.

[]

Central Committee Departments

Despite progress made by Gorbachev and Andropov before him in refurbishing the departments, almost half of them remain in the hands of elderly Brezhnev-era holdovers. Moreover, the Economics Department is once again vacant—an anomalous situation in light of Gorbachev's concern for improving party management of the economy. []

In addition to Ponomarev, there are five heads of Central Committee departments who, by virtue of age, long tenure in office, and their association with the old guard, are likely candidates for replacement soon:

- Nikolay Savinkin, 74, who has headed the Administrative Organs Department since 1968. As the department's work is both important and sensitive—it oversees the military and the police—Gorbachev will want his own man at its head soon.
- Ivan Yastrebov, head of the Heavy Industry and Power Engineering Department. Although only in office since 1984, he is 74 and was selected by Chernenko.
- Vasiliy Shauro, the 73-year-old head of the Culture Department who has held the position since 1965.
- Kirill Simonov, the 68-year-old Transport and Communications Department chief who has been on the job for more than 23 years.

- Stepan Chervonenko, the 70-year-old head of the Cadres Abroad Department, which oversees the assignment of Soviets to foreign countries. []

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Regional Party Organizations

Even with Gorbachev's unprecedented success in turning over the leadership of the republic party organizations, almost 50 Brezhnev-era provincial first secretaries—out of the total of 155 up for reelection—have been returned to office in the recent party elections. The reelection of Ukrainian and Kazakhstan party chiefs Vladimir Shcherbitskiy and Dinmukhamed Kunayev—both Brezhnev proteges—sends a strong signal through the bureaucracy that Gorbachev is still encountering resistance in the Politburo and the republics. []

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With Viktor Grishin's replacement as Moscow party chief and recent removal from the Politburo, Shcherbitskiy and Kunayev are the most conspicuous remaining Brezhnev holdovers among the regional leaders. There is little doubt that Gorbachev would like to unseat Shcherbitskiy, who seems to be out of step with Gorbachev's foreign policy views and to be resisting Gorbachev's cadre policy by harboring a host of Brezhnev-era appointees in important oblast first secretary posts. Apparently because of Shcherbitskiy's protection, only five of the republic's 25 provincial party first secretaries have been replaced. Recent press attacks on some of these leaders are probably a manifestation of Gorbachev's displeasure with the slow pace of turnover in the republic. []

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The task of removing Shcherbitskiy and Kunayev will not be an easy one. Unlike Grishin, Shcherbitskiy has not left himself open to charges of corruption or economic mismanagement, nor has he exhibited the gross character flaws that served as a pretext for Romanov's removal. The reelection of Shcherbitskiy and Kunayev makes a quick removal from the Politburo unlikely. But the unprecedented personal attack

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on Kunayev following his reelection to head the Kazakhstan party suggests his removal is still a possibility.

Outlook and Implications

The changes Gorbachev has made in the central and regional leadership probably will be reflected at the 27th Party Congress in a major reshuffling of the Central Committee, now composed mainly of the incumbents of top party and government posts. Gorbachev now appears likely to replace roughly half of the 319-member body with new appointees beholden to him or his associates for their positions—the highest rate at any congress since 1961. This will make the body a more compliant servant of the new leadership, more supportive of its goals and less likely to offer resistance to its policies.

As a group, Gorbachev's new party leaders are not only younger but, in many instances, also better equipped to do their jobs. Unlike their predecessors, most escaped the disruption of World War II and had the opportunity to finish higher educations before launching party careers. Although the evidence is as yet too sparse to assess their temperament and policy inclinations, it is likely that they will be less compromised by association with past policies and practices, more open to innovative solutions to the country's problems, and more energetic implementers of new policies introduced to solve them. In Moscow, for example, new first secretary Yel'tsin—just named a candidate member of the Politburo—brings a first-class technical education to the solution of the city's problems. His predecessor, Grishin, only managed to attend a railroad technical school before being thrust into party jobs.

Despite their evident skills, the new leaders will be hard pressed to carry out the leadership revolution Gorbachev hopes for:

- They face the same formidable social and economic problems as those who preceded them in office.

- They will have few new management tools at their disposal, barring the introduction of more radical reforms than we have seen to date, and will have to work within the same institutional constraints as their predecessors.

If failure looms, many of them will be tempted to obfuscate the facts and will seek to protect, rather than punish, their subordinates. Gorbachev will keep close watch on his new appointees. The Politburo, according to published accounts of a recent meeting, promised to keep constant supervision of new Moscow party boss Yel'tsin's efforts to restore the capital to social and economic health. It has been relatively easy for Gorbachev to remove ineffective veterans, most of whom were at retirement age, but the real test of his revolution will be his willingness and ability to sack his own appointees should they founder.

Gorbachev needs to find measures to institutionalize the higher rates of turnover of party leaders required to make sure his renewed apparatus does not lose its edge. He will have to perform a difficult balancing act, establishing enough job insecurity to keep party leaders from lapsing into the laxity of the Brezhnev years, without generating the fear, grumbling, and alienation in the ranks that ultimately caused Khrushchev's own appointees to turn against him.

Assessing Gorbachev's Momentum at the Congress

The 27th Party Congress will be an important test of how fast Gorbachev will be able to push ahead with his ambitious plans for rejuvenating the party leadership. His evident failure to achieve all that he hoped for during the regional party elections leading up to the national congress makes it all the more important that he be able to demonstrate continued momentum. Gorbachev may plan several initiatives to give a new boost to his efforts to renew the party leadership and consolidate his political position.

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Top Leadership Changes

Gorbachev reportedly intends to make several additional changes in the Politburo and Secretariat. Although the reelection of Shcherbitskiy and Kunayev as party chiefs in their republics makes their immediate removal unlikely, Gorbachev could move to further outflank them in the Politburo. He has already advanced Grishin's replacement in Moscow, Boris Yel'tsin, to candidate membership on the Politburo, and Vsevolod Murakhovskiy, a new first deputy premier from Gorbachev's Stavropol' bailiwick, may also be moved up. Gorbachev undoubtedly also wants to move now to improve his position in the Secretariat by promoting like-minded officials such as Yakovlev and Zagladin. [redacted]

A De-Brezhnevization Campaign

There are indications that Gorbachev plans to launch a new drive against the old guard at the congress by delivering a forceful attack on the corruption, sycophancy, and mistakes of the Brezhnev years. A campaign to repudiate the deceased ruler's leadership style and discredit those—such as Shcherbitskiy and Kunayev—associated with his regime has been picking up steam in the Soviet media. Reports of an anti-Brezhnev campaign in the works have been lent credibility by events at recent republic-level congresses in Central Asia, where former leaders from the Brezhnev era have been subjected to humiliating personal attacks during the proceedings (see inset). [redacted]

Limiting Tenure in Office

Gorbachev reportedly fought for, but failed to achieve, provisions in the draft of the new party statute that would reintroduce limits on the tenure in office of party officials—limits similar to those introduced under Khrushchev but rescinded by Brezhnev. He may try again to push through such changes at the congress; proposals to include such limits have been prominently featured in the officially sanctioned "debate" of the draft statute that has been conducted in the Soviet press. [redacted]

Reorganizing the Apparatus

Gorbachev may also use the congress to streamline the organization of the party's central apparatus—giving him a new pretext for reshuffling senior

Criticism of Deposed Republic First Secretaries

Deposed first secretaries in Turkmenistan, Kirgiziya, and Tadzhikistan have been roundly criticized by their successors for corruption and mismanagement:

- *New Turkmen party chief Niyazov excoriated his predecessor Mukhamednazar Gapurov, who had been in office since 1969, for fostering nepotism, sycophancy, servility, and irresponsibility among his party subordinates.*
- *Ousted Kirgiz first secretary Turdakun Usubaliyev was accused by his replacement, Absamat Masaliyev, of "encouraging servility and intrigue" and promoting "panderers" to leadership positions.*
- *In Tadzhikistan, incoming party chief Makhkamar criticized both the former first secretary, Rakhmar Nabiyeu, and the second secretary, Yuriy Belov, for tolerating irresponsibility among their subordinates in the party apparatus, and even for overlooking violations of the law by republic officials.* [redacted]

officials in the process. Such a move would be consistent with his drive to tighten up management and would complement the consolidation of government ministries and agencies he has already begun. [redacted]

[redacted] the Letters Department created by Chernenko has already been dissolved—[redacted] the failure of the recent republic congresses to announce new leadership for letters departments at that level. [redacted] departments overseeing culture, propaganda, and foreign policy are also candidates for mergers or realignments of responsibilities. [redacted]

A failure by the congress to ratify at least some of these initiatives would almost certainly be perceived in the Soviet bureaucracy as a significant setback for

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Gorbachev, damaging his ability to push ahead with his agenda:

- It will be particularly important for him to advance some of his allies into the Politburo and Secretariat. By doing so, he can neutralize Shcherbitskiy and Kunayev and postpone a move to remove them from the leadership.
- An endorsement by the congress of limits on the tenure in office of party officials is not as essential to Gorbachev for now, but it would send a strong signal of the new leadership's resolve to push ahead with the process of rejuvenating the party leadership.
- A successful last-minute move against either Kunayev or Shcherbitskiy would be an unprecedented slap in the face to the party organizations of the Ukraine and Kazakhstan and a dramatic gesture demonstrating that he has no intention of letting the remaining vestiges of the old guard slow the pace of change.

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